



Steering Committee Draft - Committee Meeting Summary

May 16, 2001

The following is a summary of presentations given, issues raised, actions undertaken or recommendations made. When possible, lengthy discussions have been summarized into themes or summary statements.

Steering Committee Members Present:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peter Beaulieu
PSRC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandra Meyer
City of Renton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Leonard
FHWA |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Leonard
FHWA | <input type="checkbox"/> Mick Monken
City of Woodinville | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bernard Van deKamp
City of Bellevue |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian O'Sullivan
Sound Transit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Barlow
Community Transit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leonard Newstrum
Yarrow Point |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Friedman
U.S. EPA | <input type="checkbox"/> Terra Hegy
WA Fish & Wildlife | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Cairns
City of Redmond |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Arndt
City of Kirkland | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Johannes Kurz
Snohomish County | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eddie Low
City of Bothell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Brennan-Dubbs
U.S. Fish & Wildlife | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ann Martin
King County | <input type="checkbox"/> John Witmer
FTA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dan Drais
FTA | <input type="checkbox"/> Kim Becklund
City of Bellevue | <input type="checkbox"/> Seyed Safavian
City of Bothell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mitch Wasserman
City of Clyde Hill | <input type="checkbox"/> Bob Sokol
City of Kenmore | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Wickstrom
City of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Vlcek
City of Lynnwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Debra Symmonds
City of Mercer Island | <input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Gross
City of Newcastle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Therese Swanson
WA Dept. of Ecology | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharon Griffin
Hunts Point | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Morrow
City of Tukwila |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Burke
Port of Seattle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Carr
PSCAA | <input type="checkbox"/> Barbara Gilliland
Sound Transit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chuck Chappell
FHWA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phil Fordyce
WSDOT | <input type="checkbox"/> Jack Kennedy
U.S. Army Corps |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Gibbons
NMFS | <input type="checkbox"/> Allyson Brooks
WA Dept. CT&E | |

Staff and Observers

Project Management Team

Mike Cummings, WSDOT
Don Samdahl, Mirai Associates
Ron Anderson, DEA

Keith McGowan, McGowan Environmental
Paul Bergman, PRR

CALL TO ORDER

Michael Cummings, WSDOT, called the meeting to order at 1:43 PM.

Mr. Cummings reviewed the focus of the meeting with the members:

- Program Update
- Publish Draft EIS: Re-inventing NEPA Consensus Point
- Preferred Alternative Refinements – Roadway Components

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment requested or given.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Cummings reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule. The Steering Committee will meet again on June 12 and July 26 (July 10 meeting cancelled) at the Kirkland City Hall. The July 26th meeting is of significance, as the program team will be developing the recommendation on the preferred alternative (PA).

Mr. Cummings gave the spring speaker bureaus update; over 90 presentations have been given over the past year.

Mr. Cummings reviewed the most recent postings found on the Community Feedback page of the I-405 Corridor Program website. He noted that King County Executive Ron Sims has responded to Bellevue Chamber's feedback, while the project management team still owes a response. Also, a new City of Renton letter includes a request to remove the Burlington Northern right-of-way (BNSF) preservation from further consideration by the program.

A Funding and Phasing Sub-committee has been created by the Executive Committee to address funding issues, including questions voiced by the legislature. Subcommittee members include:

- Councilmember McKenna (Chair)
- Councilmember Cothorn
- Councilmember Marshall
- Mayor Mullet
- Councilmember Paylor
- Mayor Putter
- Harold Taniguchi
- David Dye

Initial guiding principles the committee discussed were:

- Attempt to make all improvements at once -"get in, get out"
- Do it as fast as possible (10 years)
- Support Reforms; Design Build, Permit Streamlining, etc.
- Coordinate Actions with other projects (Trans-Lake, Sound Transit, etc.)

The subcommittee for further discussion has identified the following issues:

- Ballot schedule and coordination
- Regional/large project funding
- Funding sources and bonding
- Cost estimates and level of detail

The Executive Committee will oversee the sub-committee's approach. Mr. Cummings noted that response to funding questions needs to be in respect to the established committee process since a final preferred alternative has not yet been recommended.

Trans-Lake has also set up a subcommittee to examine these issues and their first meeting will be Friday, May 11. Mr. Cummings noted that cost estimates are not where they need to be for the voters to make an informed decision.

ISSUANCE OF DRAFT EIS

Mr. Cummings introduced Keith McGowan to head up discussion of the pDEIS review process; he first thanked the core members working on the review process program. He also introduced Bruce Smith, WSDOT, who will be overseeing the ESA work for the Program.

Mr. McGowan reviewed the pDEIS review process. He also thanked Kimberly and Christina for sorting the 700+ comments. In some cases, the approach to the comments was modified in order to provide more complete responses.

The committees are currently in the Draft EIS Phase of the I-405 Program. It includes a number of public involvement events (open houses and hearings). They anticipate that the Draft EIS will be issued in June, and the next key target date is in the fall when the Final EIS will be issued and a decision on the preferred alternative is expected.

Mr. McGowan reviewed the EIS status, schedule and process. He explained that all comments on the pDEIS were assigned and sorted by the below codes. The codes provided direction to the consultant team as the comments were reviewed:

- Code 1/YES – The reviewer agreed fully with the statement, including the language.
- Code 2 – The reviewer suggested that change, including language, is needed. The consultant team needs to follow-up on the suggested changes.
- Code 3 –
- Code 4 – The reviewer's comment was not addressed in the larger EIS, but will be addressed in subsequent follow-ups.
- Code NO – Reviewer suggested that specific information not be included in the Draft EIS. In this case, the reviewer also supplied their reasons for this suggestion. Code No might also be combined with Code 3, meaning the comment is more appropriate in regards to the Final EIS rather than the draft.
- Code D – Reviewer is seeking information that exists in a different place than where they were looking.
- Code E – Reviewer is seeking information already documented in the expertise report but not in the Draft EIS
- Code F – Team will need to follow-up with reviewer due to the level of controversy/importance of their comment. The comment has been marked "High Priority" and will be further reviewed by the co-leads before follow-up
- Code V – Consultant team needs to verify reviewer's comments

Mr. McGowan noted that in some cases the consultant team needed clarification of the comments. He also stressed that the team was very diligent in sorting for accuracy.

Jim Leonard asked if there is a tracking system for Code 4 comments. Mr. McGowan confirmed that comments not addressed in the larger DEIS process are being tracked and will be addressed in the final process.

Eddie Low asked what a reviewer should do if they have a comment marked Code E but have further questions after referring to the expertise report. Mr. McGowan said he would raise the questions with WSDOT. Mr. McGowan added that expertise reports are being incorporated through reference in the Draft EIS, which will be available for public review.

Leonard Newstrum asked how many locations would carry the Draft EIS. Mr. McGowan assured that although this has yet to be determined, the Draft EIS would be available at a sufficient

number of public locations. Mr. Newstrum also asked how successful this approach has been in the past. Jim Leonard gave a positive response referring to the success of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge EIS.

Johannes Kurtz mentioned that some of the experts had disagreements at the time the expertise reports were issued. Mr. Kurtz asked what the resolution to the disagreements had been. Mr. McGowan answered that both the comments and responses had been documented. The documents were then sent back to WSDOT where they were reviewed and approved. He said the reports were revised based on comments. Kimberly Farley emphasized that the comments were then distributed back to the committee members.

Mr. McGowan mentioned that there were too many comments to summarize, but that a large number of them concerned the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA). Therefore, Mr. McGowan said that the PPA description and context is being substantially revised in the Draft EIS to make it clearer in its standing. The revisions will also more clearly identify which and where the components are being evaluated in the DEIS.

In addition to PPA questions, reviewers also had inquiries about the secondary and cumulative effects of the alternatives. In response, Mr. McGowan said there would be substantial revisions to clarify the definitions of projects and actions. There will also be an effort to characterize the effects of the alternatives with more accuracy.

Ann Martin mentioned there were also many comments regarding High Capacity Transit (HCT). Ms. Martin said the team recognized that the reviewers sometimes confused the definition of HCT with other terms. She said the definition is currently being revised for clarity.

Mr. McGowan reviewed the consensus point that the committee is trying to reach. The members are being asked to approve issuance of the Draft EIS.

Leonard Newstrum commented that some of his comments weren't addressed in the original packet and therefore they were not reviewed. Mr. Newstrum requested more data on the transportation elements be available at the front of the document, in a matrix format. Mr. McGowan said that the data is available in the DEIS expertise report for transportation but wasn't put into a matrix due to technical difficulty. A decision was made by the committee to include a summary matrix in the front of the DEIS in order to help reviewers frame questions quickly.

Mr. Newstrum also said that people were uncomfortable with the lack of analysis on the PPA. Mr. McGowan said there will be an effort to more accurately characterize the PPA and its standing relative to the other alternatives. He also stated that all the components in the PPA are being evaluated in the EIS, mostly in Alternative Three. Mr. Newstrum mentioned that the mixed-mode of the PPA makes it hard to evaluate. Mike Cummings emphasized that the PPA is a strictly non-binding position. However, Mr. Cummings said all the components of the PPA are addressed in the DEIS.

Mr. Newstrum requested the mitigation possibilities of HCT be more clearly defined and explained. Ann Martin responded that technology-based items need more discussion rather be addressed as mitigation at this time, and is not the focus of a programmatic EIS.

Mr. Cummings asked for a consensus to publish the Draft EIS. The Steering Committee members approved the request without objections.

PRELIMINARY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE – ROADWAY COMPONENTS

Mr. Samdahl reviewed what the committee's approach for deciding on a preferred alternative over the coming months. The following will be addressed by the committee during the Preferred Alternative Development:

- Strategic look at corridor performance and impacts

- Understanding of how the pieces fit together as a system
- Examination of the tradeoffs

Johannes Kurtz asked what the definition of “strategic look” was. Mr. Samdahl explained that the term includes lane balance issues, a strategic look at the entire corridor, and how proposed freeway and HOV components fit together.

The preferred alternative decision process consists of three important parts:

- System level decisions (current status)
- Community level decisions
- Project level decisions

The following system level discussions were reviewed at the meeting:

- I-405 and SR 167 Freeway lane balance
- Connecting Freeway Improvements
- Arterial Capacity Projects
- Arterial HOV Projects
- HOV direct access locations

Ann Martin voiced concern that there was an imbalance of specificity among the transportation components that will cause trouble when trying to reach a preferred decision – more information exists for some components than others and they were reaching a decision on a preferred alternative prior to fully considering all the other modes in the DEIS.

Ron Anderson reviewed freeway lane balance considerations and information on the lane balance analysis that had been conducted on the preliminary preferred alternative. Mr. Anderson emphasized that affordability is essential when dealing with lane balance issues and that vehicles need to be stored on ramps rather than blocking the mainline. Location by location, Mr. Anderson described the proposed freeway lane balance considerations for the preliminary preferred alternative.

Leonard Newstrum mentioned that he has low confidence in area expansion plans that are based on daily numbers. Mr. Anderson replied that they also look at peak period numbers. Therese Swanson said she was concerned that there was an assumption that additional freeway lanes will be added even though no decision had been made on the preferred alternative. Mr. Cummings responded that she was correct that no decision had been made and the intent of the presentation was not to suggest this. Rather they were trying to provide more information on the roadway components that make up the preliminary preferred alternative to help them make this decision.

Bernard Van deKamp asked whether 2020 or 2030 numbers would be used to assess transportation improvements for the direct access projects. Mr. Samdahl said that they have been using 2020 numbers. He said that the final version will also predominantly use 2020 numbers but will include some 2030 numbers. Mr. Van deKamp requested more information on the I-90/I-405 interchange.

Ann Martin asked if the interchanges would be open only to transit. Mr. Samdahl said the assumption is that the interchanges will also be open to carpools.

Mr. Cummings said that the next meeting would focus mostly on transit and TDM components. The project management team will be meeting with a number of committee members again to address the issues of the meeting and to conduct any follow-up.

ADJOURNMENT

Mike Cummings adjourned at 3:58 p.m.